



EmployeeUPDATE

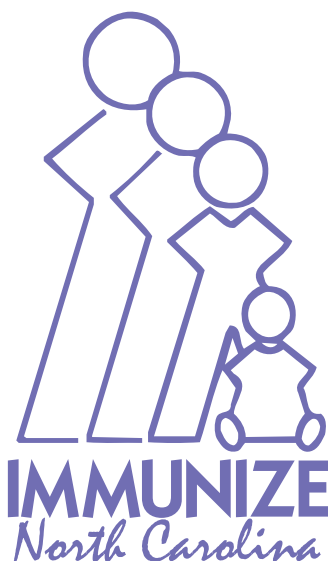
Our Mission: To serve the people of North Carolina by enabling individuals, families and communities to be healthy and secure, and to achieve social and economic well-being.

A monthly publication for employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

North Carolina's child immunization rates rank 3rd in nation

North Carolina now ranks third among the states in immunization rates among children 19 to 35 months old. With more children being protected against vaccine-preventable diseases each year, the nation's childhood immunization rates remain at or near record levels for routinely recommended vaccines, according to 2006 estimates released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

According to the CDC's annual National Immunization Survey (NIS), the percentage of U.S. children 19 to 35 months of age who have received the recommended series of childhood vaccines was 77 percent in 2006. North Carolina had a coverage rate of 81.5 percent, following Massachusetts (83.6 percent) and Connecticut (82 percent). In 2005, North Carolina ranked seventh in the country.



The recommended series of childhood vaccines consists of four doses of diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP) vaccine; three doses of polio vaccine; one or more doses of measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine; three doses of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b vaccine (Hib); three doses of

hepatitis B vaccine; and one or more doses of varicella (chickenpox) vaccine. This set of immunizations begins shortly after a child is born and continues up to 2 years of age.

Additionally, North Carolina ranks first in the country in terms of one or more doses of MMR; second in one or more doses of varicella; fourth in three or more doses of pneumococcal (PCV) vaccine; and fifth in four or more doses of DTaP.

The success of North Carolina's immunization program would not be possible without the hard work of health care providers and the commitment of parents. Thanks to their efforts, very few infants and children in our state suffer from diseases that were once widespread and, in the past, caused hundreds of deaths each year. ■

INSIDE TOP FEATURES

ACCESS North Carolina is more user-friendly, Page 2
DHHS graduates 11 from state employee manager program, Page 4
Stokes County—best paramedics in North Carolina, Pages 4 and 5
DHHS takes strides towards more professional websites, Page 6

**Instant
Messaging
and
IT Security**

➡ Page 7



**Be ready
for this
year's flu
season**

➡ Page 9



ACCESS North Carolina is more user-friendly

Disabled people in North Carolina have a new guide available to keep them abreast of the accessibility of hundreds of attractions in the state.

Through the new ACCESS North Carolina guide, people with disabilities can easily navigate and plan adventures in any of the state's 100 counties.

"We are happy to be able to offer this excellent guide, particularly to those who will benefit most – people with physical disabilities," said Linda Harrington, director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS). "This book provides a comprehensive look at destinations across our beautiful state, listing their accessibility, locations, hours of operation and contact information."

DVR issued this fifth edition of "ACCESS North Carolina, A Guide to Travel Site Accessibility" this fall. Distribution is coordinated by the N.C. Department of Commerce through its Division of Travel and Tourism.

ACCESS North Carolina was developed with the special needs of residents and visitors with disabilities in mind. Through symbols and ratings, the revised guide simplifies accessibility information for all people with disabilities, emphasizing what they can do and where they can go rather than what cannot be done. Since 1986, the ACCESS North Carolina program, which is funded through the voluntary purchase of vanity license plates, has funded accessibility projects at state parks and historic sites. From the mountains to the coast, the program has worked to make North Carolina travel destinations more accessible to all.

For this edition of ACCESS:

- Attractions are grouped by counties and cities so that when visiting one location, it is more convenient to find other attractions close by.



- Indexes by sites, counties and cities make attraction listings easier to find.
- Information is grouped by, and the book is tabbed for, the state's five geographic regions—mountains, foothills, piedmont, coastal plain and coast.
- The book offers a system of icons and text to present basic travel site accessibility information.
- Reviews are focused on parking, building entrances, building interiors, outdoor amenities and restrooms.

ACCESS North Carolina is available online as a pdf file or as a text file at [http://dvr.dhhs.state.nc.us/DVR/](http://dvr.dhhs.state.nc.us/DVR/pubs/accessnc/accessnc.htm)

[pubs/accessnc/accessnc.htm](http://dvr.dhhs.state.nc.us/DVR/pubs/accessnc/accessnc.htm). The printed guide is also available at all North Carolina Welcome Centers. For copies of the book, you may also call the N.C. Division of Travel and Tourism toll-free at 1-800-VISIT NC, or send your request to: ACCESS North Carolina, NCDVRS, 2801 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-2801. ■

*Allison Slight
DHHS Public Affairs intern*



Jalil Isa

iSalud y Saludos!

Latino roots in North Carolina

Lots of Latino events have occurred this past month. In late October, I participated in an annual event at the Mexican consulate that was mentioned in last month's newsletter – Bi-national Health Week. This observance includes health promotion and educational activities aimed at bringing much-needed health information and healthcare services to the area's many Mexicans as well as Hispanics from other Central American and South American countries.

The week-long event culminated with a health fair in which DHHS participated. The Division of Public Health helped staff the event and provided many of the materials handed out, including information about child lead poisoning, rabies, healthy home environments, oral health, chronic diseases including asthma, and injury prevention such as fire prevention.

For those of you who may not be familiar with what a consulate is or does, think of it as a mini-embassy. Almost every country has an embassy in its host country's capital. But when the population of foreigners from a particular country begins to grow, that government sees the need to open "branches" throughout the land that can provide some of the services usually handled by their embassy (passports, visas, birth records). Otherwise, foreigners living in large host countries like the U.S.

might be forced to travel long distances to the nation's capital to take care of their affairs. The first foreign consulate to open up in North Carolina was Mexico's in 2000. Since then, Canada is the only other country to have added an official representative.

Another event was one of the first Hispanic feature-length films shot in North Carolina. Called "*Los Sueños de Angélica*" (Angelica's Dreams), the movie was in some ways a big pitch to get Hispanics in the area to set up a credit union account through the Latino Credit Union (based out of Durham). Because many Latinos don't trust banks and don't understand how financial systems work in the U.S., they tend to keep their money in cash, which can be lost or stolen. Those who watch this film will surely benefit from the movie's many messages – especially the parts about how to safely store their money.

Speaking of financial institutions, it's been a little over a month since another "first" made a hit in Raleigh: the state's first Latino bank opened its doors in the town of Garner, just south of Raleigh. While not the first bank to operate in Spanish, it *is* the first bank to be chartered from the start to serve the state's Hispanics with services specifically catering to them.

Of course, I can't mention these events without having something to say about one of my favorite cultural features– food, especially the spread of Mexican chow in the lobby of the Carolina Theater during the movie's premiere. What was funny to me was the reaction of an Anglo friend who accompanied me to the event. She'd never tried *agua de horchata* (horchata water, basically a heavily sweetened watery milk made out of rice and spiced with cinnamon. It's goooood!!). As with many Southern foods I've tried in North Carolina that I've become addicted to (can you say "hushpuppies"!), there have been a number of new Latin foods that I have had the good fortune of trying for my first time here. One of them is this horchata beverage I first tasted a few years ago. Since then, every time my non-Latino friends try it, they marvel at this sweet, refreshing drink and wonder why they've gone so long without having savored it. Many Mexican restaurants serve it, so see if you can have a taste the next time you go out for some Mexican grub.

These are just some of the many things that are going on around us as Latinos continue putting down roots in this state. The list of events will surely continue to grow. ■

Jalil

DHHS graduates 11 from state employee manager program

Eleven employees from the Department of Health and Human Services graduated from the North Carolina Certified Public Manager Program this fall. Among 55 graduates from 14 different agencies or universities across the state, the DHHS employees proved to be 11 strong managerial leaders.

The graduation was held Oct. 1 in the Museum of History in Raleigh. The graduates are Georgia Gulledge, Marsha Higgins, Rita Horton, Valerie Knox, Andrea Murphy, Tara Myers, Bernice Price, Dorothy Sherrod-Bynum, Royce Thigpen, Stephanie Vinson and Mary Walls.

The curriculum provides a comprehensive, competency-based developmental program of eight courses completed over two years. Candidate requirements include an individual project that applies the concepts learned in the course toward a problem or service improvement opportunity in the participant's work unit.



The DHHS graduates are:

First row: Bernice Price, Royce Thigpen, Mary Walls, Dorothy Sherrod-Bynum

Second row: Valerie Knox, Marsha Higgins, Rita Horton

Third row: Stephanie Vinson, Tara Myers, Georgia Gulledge, Andrea Murphy.

The North Carolina Society of Certified Public Managers exists to provide training for advancement of managerial abilities as well as establish performance standards for managers in public service. The program is open to state government middle managers who have successfully completed three prerequi-

site supervisor training courses and scored more than 90 percent on the supervision exam for managers and professionals.

Take time to congratulate our graduates! ■

Allison Slight
DHHS Public Affairs intern

Stokes County EMS team judged best paramedics in North Carolina

Two paramedics from Stokes County unseated last year's defending champions, topping the performance of four other teams to regain their title as the state's top paramedic team.

Scott Brown and Fred Lawson, who also won the competition in 2005, outperformed their competitors on

Oct. 7 during the State Paramedic Competition event viewed by more than 300 of their peers during the 17th annual North Carolina Emergency Medicine Today Conference. They reclaimed the award at a recognition banquet on Oct. 16 in Greensboro.

"The paramedic competition stresses the value and importance of education and training," said Drexal Pratt, chief of the N.C. Office of Emergency Medical Services. "These champions, the regional winners and the defending

cont. on page 5

Stokes County EMS Team cont. from page 4

champions all exemplify the kind of professionalism that North Carolina deserves and expects from its first responders. I salute them all for their hard work and competitive spirit.” ■

Scott Brown, left, and Fred Lawson, right, receive top award from Drexdal Pratt, chief of the N.C. Office of Emergency Medical Services.



Seasonal safety suggestions

Holiday time need not be tragedy time. With a few precautions you can make sure everyone has a good, safe time.

The U.S. Fire Administration reports that each year fires occurring during the holiday season injure 2,600 people and cause more than \$930 million in damage. Here are some safety tips for this holiday season:

- If you purchase a live Christmas tree, do not place it near a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near it. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.
- Do not overload electrical outlets or link more than three light strands, unless

the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Periodically check the wires; they should never be warm to the touch.

- All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents.
- If you burn candles, make sure they are in stable holders away from flammable materials. Never leave the house with candles burning.

Some seasonal decorations can make homes more susceptible to accidents and fires. Safety experts stress that it is important to have a fire escape plan. Studies show that only 23 percent of U.S. households have an escape plan in place and not all of them have

practiced their plan. Planning and practicing your home fire escape plan can mean the difference between surviving a fire and becoming its victim.

The following is a list of fire safety tips for you and your family:

- Make sure you have a smoke alarm installed on every level of your home, inside each bedroom and outside of each sleeping area.
- Test your smoke alarms at least once a month. Use the “spring ahead” and “fall back” time changes as reminders to change the batteries.
- Develop and practice a fire escape plan that identifies two ways out of each room (usually a door and a

cont. on page 16

Department takes strides toward more professional and integrated websites

The DHHS Office of Public Affairs recently unveiled new Web Standards and a new Website Style Guide for the department. A new departmental policy on public websites was just published as well. These documents (available at www.ncdhhs.gov/redesignproject) will help the department have a more professional and integrated web presence.

The Web Standards provide basic technical and governance guidance for the entire department. They were created by Public Affairs and approved by DIRM.

The Website Style Guide provides minimum required elements, review procedures and content guidelines, as well as helpful tips on linking and file format. This Style Guide is a resource to all in the department who write for any of our websites.

Web governance

The policy, standards and style guide are a tool for the department to establish web governance. In addition, and much more important to good web governance, are people.

Through the years, the department has created many websites, now numbering 127. Together they comprise tens of thousands of individual web pages. Our ability to manage such a vast web presence has not kept pace with growth.

Each division director has assigned one person as their go-to person for web content. These “Web Content Managers” are not technical, but they keep their eye on the divisions’ websites on behalf of the director.

For example, we all have links and pages on our sites that were placed there years ago, and now no one remembers the reason why. The Content Manager asks why, and makes appropriate changes. Web Content Managers will coordinate compliance with policies and standards, and will be the liaison with the Website Redesign Project. This is just the beginning: larger divisions will probably need to assign “content coordinators” at some point down the road. It’s a new type of web governance and it may take a while to get the kinks worked out.

The Web Standards and Website Style Guide specify that all new website materials should be reviewed by Public Affairs, and levels of review for revisions to existing web pages should be negotiated with the appropriate public information officer. This is not a new requirement, but nonetheless may be new to some. The website is our most public of publications, and Public Affairs

has the expertise and the perspective that no other office has.

Content Management System: Still on the table, for later

Many people have been involved in planning for a web content management system for the department. These are powerful web applications to create and manage websites. Content management systems allow an organization to manage and control a large, dynamic collection of web material. They help with content creation, content control, editing, and many essential web maintenance functions, and can give non-technical people the ability to update their websites.

Web content management systems are the industry standard method for large organizations to manage their websites. The type of system that DHHS needs is not inexpensive. We hope to make it part of the department’s budget request in 2009.

Questions on the Website Redesign Project?

Go to www.ncdhhs.gov/redesign-project or contact the DHHS web master, Lois Nilsen, at 715-4394 or lois.nilsen@ncmail.net . ■

Instant messaging and IT security

Instant messaging, or IM, is an increasingly popular method for communicating over the Internet, both at home and at work. Instant messaging allows users to see whether a chosen friend or co-worker is connected to the Internet and to communicate with them. However, as with most Internet-based tools, the increasing use of instant messaging has led to an associated increase in the number of security risks.

IM networks provide the ability not only to transfer text messages, but also to transfer files. Information disclosure may occur because the text messages and the transferred files are communicated in clear text over the Internet. But instant messengers can also transfer destructive worms and malware, and may provide back-door access to hackers. The number of worms for instant messaging is increasing each month, and judging by the success of some of

these worms, instant messaging clearly offers the opportunity for malicious interference. This is particularly dangerous in the DHHS environment, in which citizens' health information and/or other confidential information may be transmitted in clear text through the IM application.

DHHS recognizes that certain needs do exist within our department that may justify the use of instant messaging. However, the North Carolina State Chief Information Officer recently issued a memo requesting agencies to discourage the use of instant messaging because of security concerns. As a result, the deputy secretary of DHHS has requested that divisions and offices submit a business justification for the use of IM to the DHHS Privacy and Security Office. Some divisions have already done so.

The state is in the process of developing an instant messaging policy. Meanwhile, the DHHS Privacy and Security Office strongly suggests not using instant messaging. If you plan to use IM for a valid business reason, please submit your justification to DHHS PSO. The office highly recommends that you apply appropriate safeguards, including the use of a strong encryption tool, when using IM. Still, as with any Internet-based technology, the best way to ensure the security of instant messaging services is to educate users on the risks involved and the means of mitigating those risks, preferably before a serious incident occurs. As always, if you encounter any security incidents, please submit them to DHHS PSO via their website at www.security.dhhs.state.nc.us. Questions should be directed to dhhs.security@ncmail.net. ■

Pyreddy Reddy
DHHS Chief Information Security Officer



Wilson retires from OEO



Lawrence Wilson, director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, has retired after 27 years of service. Recognized nationally for his leadership and work with community action agencies, Wilson was recently presented the Order of the Long Leaf Pine by the Community Action Association of North Carolina. With Wilson left, are his wife, Linda, and Assistant Secretary Jackie Sheppard during a retirement ceremony held Oct. 26. ■

DMA Safety Representative Recognized



Terri Smith receives her DHHS Safety Representative certificate from department safety director Mark Martin.

Beal takes position at UNC



Pheon Beal, right, with Assistant Secretary Jackie Sheppard, received the Old North State award in October in recognition of her outstanding service to DHHS. Beal left the department Nov. 1 after 12 years to join an effort at the University of North Carolina developing supports for families of deployed service members. At DHHS, Beal served as special advisor to the secretary on workforce development issues. She previously served as director of the Division of Social Services, where she played a pivotal role in the welfare reform effort, substantially reducing the state's welfare caseload. ■

Terri Smith, property manager for the Division of Medical Assistance, has completed Phase I of the DHHS Certified Safety Representative Program. As the DMA Safety Representative, she is responsible for the day-to-day oversight of safety programs for the 460 DMA employees in the Kirby, Hoey, One Bank of America and Industrial Drive office buildings in Raleigh.

Smith received this award for successfully completing a comprehensive review and update of the division's safety and health policies and for ensuring that all DMA workplace safety inspections are timely and complete. ■

What's happening with BEACON?

As you have been hearing, BEACON is the state's new payroll and human resources system. State government agencies and their employees will be transitioned into the new, integrated system beginning in early 2008. You may want to know:

- The new DHHS BEACON website is at www.ncdhhs.gov/humanresources/beacon.htm. Watch this site for important news and information relevant to DHHS.
- Training schedules and information for core users – the folks in Human Resources and payroll who work directly with the system – have been distributed and are being reviewed. Core users may ask their supervisors for more information.
- How will you use BEACON? Watch this newsletter for information on upcoming Employee Self Service training information.
- DHHS will “go live” with BEACON in April 2008. ■



Be ready for this year's flu season

When it comes to seasonal flu, the best offense is a good defense. Get your flu shot. Unlike in past years, there is plenty of available vaccine. Make sure that your family is also protected.

A flu shot is a good idea for anyone. Some people are considered more high-risk and should make every effort to get vaccinated. These groups include:

- adults 50 years old and older
- residents of nursing homes
- people 5-49 years of age with conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease or other chronic conditions
- household contacts of people at high risk for complications
- healthcare workers
- pregnant women
- children 6-59 months old

Healthcare workers are particularly encouraged to receive flu vaccine – to protect not only themselves from the disease, but to also help prevent transmission of it to their patients, coworkers, family members and close contacts. That means you, if you are a DHHS health care worker.

You can also take actions to stop the spread of the flu and other viruses. Those steps include:

- Wash your hands frequently.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- Use disposable tissues and throw them away immediately.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- If you are sick, stay home.
- If your children are sick, keep them home. ■



DHHS WELLNESS INITIATIVE

Healthy foods at work

Does your agency have a healthy foods policy?

In the past two years, 18 DHHS agencies and facilities have adopted a healthy foods policy for their meetings and employee events where food is served. Wellness committees at these agencies and facilities have asked staff to commit to offering healthier food options – such as fruits and vegetables, low-fat milk and low-fat dairy products, water and low-fat whole-grain foods – at all events where snacks or meals are offered. This includes large potluck and catered events, as well as smaller staff meetings and training events where only refreshments may be offered.

Offering healthier food selections to employees supports them in making better choices and can help prevent the onset of chronic diseases. Making healthier options available when food is served also makes it easier for employees with existing health conditions such as diabetes to fully participate in workplace events.

We congratulate the following DHHS agencies and facilities and their wellness committees for adopting a healthy foods policy:

*Division of Aging and Adult Services
Office of Education Services
Division of Health Service Regulation
Division of Mental Health
Division of Public Health
Division of Social Services
Eastern School for the Deaf
Offices of Internal Audit
Office of Economic Opportunity
Office of Procurement and Contract Services
Office of Rural Health and Resource Development
Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS)
Council on Developmental Disabilities
ADATC Black Mountain*

*Dorothea Dix Hospital
J. Iverson Riddle Developmental Center
John Umstead Center
N.C. Special Care Center*

The healthy foods policy applies to served or shared food and does not address workplace vending selections. Improved vending selections have been addressed through changes in the Services for the Blind vending contracts and wellness committees working with vendors. Healthier vending selections were discussed in the August 2006 newsletter.

Wellness is for All Employees

- We all have some degree of risk for chronic diseases.
- Almost all employees have some personal health goal.
- Goal is to help employees reach their personal health goals.



MMIS Healthy Snack Tasting Event

What employees can do to promote healthy foods in the workplace

If your agency already has a healthy food policy, help support the policy by bringing suggested healthier foods to share and use recommended food guidelines when planning events where food and/or beverages will be served. An excellent and

cont. on page 11

DHHS Wellness Initiative cont. from page 10

easily available resource is Eat Smart North Carolina: Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings, and Events. This document can be found on the Eat Smart, Move More...NC website at www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/programs_tools/worksites/healthy_meeting_guide.html. The Guidelines provide practical suggestions and examples of foods and beverages to offer at workplace events.

If your workplace does not yet have a healthy foods policy, talk to your wellness committee about adopting a policy to provide healthier snack and meal options at your agency events. A sample healthy foods policy can be found in the Healthy Foods Guidelines document mentioned above. In the meantime, individual employees need not wait for a policy to begin bringing healthier food items to share and including healthier food and beverage selections when they plan meetings and events that include food.

Adopting a healthy foods policy is an important step that agencies can take to support their employees in making healthy lifestyle choices. Adopting this policy requires no funds. The policy requires only a commitment to planning so that when food or beverages are served at workplace events, healthy options are available. ■



The DHHS Wellness Initiative will be sending the **annual employee wellness survey** to all employees by email early in November. Please take the survey as soon as you receive it. The survey takes less than five minutes to complete.

The surveys provide important information to your wellness committee and to the department about employee wellness interests and the changes needed to better support wellness within DHHS.

Employees without work email can complete printed copies of the survey provided by their wellness committees.

Student interns at work in Public Health

You may have noticed one of the humorous ads for the upcoming *Eat Smart, Move More...Maintain, don't gain! Holiday Challenge* in this month's newsletter. The creative minds behind the print ads and a number of radio advertisements that will be played in November and

December are David Cavallo and Andrea Nikolai, two student interns in the Division of Public Health, Chronic Disease and Injury Section. David and Andrea are both students at the UNC School of Public Health in the MPH-Nutrition program. They spend one day a week in the Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch helping the communications team on various projects, including the holiday challenge. Both students hope to pursue careers in health communications. ■

Avoid Holiday Weight Gain with *Eat Smart, Move More...NC*

The holiday season is beginning. There are so many things to do, so many places to go and so many things to eat, it's no wonder that our healthy habits seem to fly out the window as soon as Thanksgiving appears on the calendar.

But what about Holiday Hangover, that embarrassing moment when you realize that those extra pounds you gain over the holidays are causing your belly to hang over your now-tight pants? Help is as close as your computer...join the second annual Eat Smart, Move More...Maintain, don't gain! Holiday Challenge.

This is not the time for anyone to try and lose weight, but with a little help people can maintain their present weight over the holidays. Register now at www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com to join this free six-week weight maintenance challenge. All you need to sign up is an email address.

The challenge is designed to help people manage the triggers that cause them to gain weight over the holidays. Each week, participants will receive a free newsletter via email containing tips on managing holiday stress, giving healthy gifts, squeezing in physical activity and navigating parties. Recipes for quick, easy, healthy dinners to prepare on busy nights and for healthier holiday goodies are also included. A food diary to track food and drink, an activity log to track activity, and a weight log are available to download from the website.

Register for the free Eat Smart, Move More...Maintain, don't gain! Holiday Challenge today at www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com.

The Holiday Challenge is a part of the *Eat Smart, Move More...NC* movement to increase healthy eating and physical activity opportunities wherever North Carolinians live, learn, earn, play and pray. Find out more at www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com.



Avoid Holiday Weight Gain this year!



Join the Holiday Challenge at
www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com.

Participation is FREE

November 19 through December 31



Avoid Holiday Hangover



Maintain your weight, don't gain!

Sign up at [**www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com**](http://www.MyEatSmartMoveMore.com).

Participation is FREE

- ▼ Receive a weekly newsletter full of tips, recipes, and more
- ▼ Download tools to monitor your progress
- ▼ Log on each week to read experts' advice
- ▼ Read how others like you are doing in the challenge

November 19 through December 31

Chili cook-off a hot event

It wasn't just the weather that was "hot, hot, hot" in October. Things also heated up at the Division of Child Development on Friday, Oct. 19, when the division's Customer Service Logistical Team organized another of its famous chili cook-offs to promote a positive and fun work environment.

The last time a chili contest was held here was in 2004. That helped draw enthusiastic participation from every worker at the Raleigh office this time around who were all vying to take top place for the best possible chili. Five teams were set up representing the Director's Office, Regulatory Services, Workforce Standards, Subsidy Services and the Administration sections.

"The best part about being a judge was not only tasting some darn good chili," said Jalil Isa of the DHHS Public Affairs Office, who served as one of the judges, "...but as soon as the judges walked in, the employees ran to us taking pictures and asking for autographs as if we were all stars!"

After much deliberation between the four judges – and realizing that no one section outperformed the other by much – the winners were named: Regulatory Services took top honors for their presentation, while the Administration Section won best overall. ■



The judges cooled off with DCD director Cyndie Bennett and staff after their hot tasting session.



DCD director Cyndie Bennett had fun with props at the "Route 66" booth during the event.



The Route 66 booth gave participants a fun opportunity to see themselves on a red-hot, fully loaded motorcycle.

Adoption Profile

Introducing Lance, Corey, Dajai and Jada

While these four children do not currently live together, they are very close and visit at least monthly. It is imperative that they find a loving, supportive adoptive family to adopt them together.

A Closer Look at Lance

His foster parents say, "Lance keeps us laughing. He is a funny and caring child." He gets along with children of all ages and is good about sharing. Lance is helpful around the house and readily does more than his share of chores. He is good with the younger children in the house and does not always have to be first in everything. He communicates well and is good about following the rules. Lance loves basketball and playing outside with his brother and friends. He attends a basketball camp a couple evenings a week and hopes to play on his school's team. Lance also enjoys fishing, skating, watching movies, computer games and reading. Lance attends regular classes at school where he worked hard to bring up his C average to As and Bs. Counseling is helping him through his feelings of loss and grief, uncertainties about life and what he can and cannot control. Lance does best when he is on a schedule and needs to know in advance if things are changed.

A Closer Look at Corey

Like his brother, Corey is lots of fun and loves to laugh. He especially likes being silly with the young twins in their foster home. Corey is very inquisitive.



Clockwise from left
Lance, b. March 31, 1994
Corey, b. June 13, 1996
Dajai, b. December 13, 2002
Jada, b. November 1, 2005

He enjoys being in the kitchen with his foster mom, watching her cook and asking her about what she is making. He also enjoys washing dishes and vacuuming the house as his contribution. Lance and Corey live together and enjoy playing basketball with other friends. Corey also runs on his school's track team. He is more competitive than his brother and needs to remember to be a team player. Corey attends regular classes at school with some resource assistance during the day. He is good about working on issues that arise once they are pointed out to him, but identifying problem areas on his own is very challenging. An individual education plan allows for adjustments that help him be more academically successful, such as

reading aloud, more time for tests, and the resource assistance. Counseling is helping Corey learn appropriate methods to express his feelings and providing him with coping skills.

A Closer Look at Dajai

Dajai is a friendly, affectionate and outgoing little girl with a sweet smile and playful personality. While she takes a while to warm up to others, Dajai plays well alone or with other children. She loves attention and being cuddled and rocked. Dajai especially likes to pretend being a mother to her baby dolls, and she enjoys playing with Dora the Explorer. Dajai loves having someone paint her fingernails and toenails and likes to watch cartoons on the weekends. Dajai continues to need a nap during the day in order to be at her best. She can dress herself, with some help choosing her clothes, and she is pretty good about brushing her teeth. Dajai is doing better in a new daycare that is less chaotic than her previous one. It is important for her to know in advance what is coming and to understand what to expect throughout the day. Dajai craves closeness and she would benefit from being able to recreate some basic nurturing rituals that she previously did not receive.

A Closer Look at Jada

Jada is a loving and adorable toddler who loves to laugh and have fun. She is active and busy and very smart. Jada has such a good memory that, if she does something to make you laugh, she'll remember it and do it again the

cont. on page 16

Adoption Profile cont. from page 16

next day. She also loves to imitate people and scare people, laughing as she does so. Jada is extremely independent and wants to do everything by herself. She uses a sippy cup and fork and spoon fairly well. Jada gets up in the morning before she has to and doesn't like to go to bed at night, although playing soft classical music helps her get to sleep. She loves dogs and anything to do with dogs, including TV commercials. Jada is a little bit of a tomboy and loves to play rough and tumble. She attends daycare where she is doing

well, aside from not wanting to miss anything during naptime.

A Family for Lance, Corey, Dajai and Jada

Lance, Corey, Dajai and Jada are four fun and wonderful children. They need an adoptive family that is prepared to love, support and nurture them. Each of them requires a consistent schedule and each needs to know of and be prepared for changes to that schedule. It will be important to spend quality time with each child

individually, as well as having fun together as a family. Dajai particularly will require some personal time to recreate some important nurturing development that she missed. This could also be a very strong attachment activity for her and the new parents.

For more information on these children or adoption and foster care in general, call NC Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network toll-free at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 (1-877-625-4371).



Seasonal safety suggestions cont. from page 5

window) and determine a specific place for your family to meet once you have exited your home.

- Make sure your plan allows for any specific needs in your household such as people with limited mobility or impaired vision.

Remember: enjoy the holidays, but be aware that accidents and injuries can occur amidst all the merriment and commotion of the season. Happy Holidays! ■

Allison Slight
DHHS Public Affairs intern

